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Christian Unity and Our Part in It

BY HENRY SMITH LEIPER

Neither pray I for these alone, but also for them which shall believe on me through their word, that they may all be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they may also be one in us, that the world may believe. . . . John 17:20-21.

JESUS believed that he and His Father were one. Jesus prayed repeatedly that after he had left the world his followers might be one; one with each other and one with him. He taught them to pray the prayer: "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done." Is it anything to you and me who pray this prayer today that we his followers are not one in a world which seems to thunder at us UNITE OR PERISH?

Are we to sit down before the prospect of an indefinite future of competition and division in what our Master longed to have an undivided body? Should we accept divisiveness as inevitable? If we do, are we not lacking in loyalty, or vision, or faith? "How," perhaps you say, "can anyone be such a dreamer as to take seriously the idea of a united Christian church in a practical world? It never has been and it can never be!"

Wait a minute, please! "Never" is a long time. I remind myself and you of what began nineteen hundred years ago. It was the building of a single church. There were differences to be sure; and important differences. Read Paul and James and you will see some of them: "Justification by faith" was Paul's teaching; "Justification by works" was James's. Some groups then were under the episcopal form of government; some were under the congregational form. Others had the rare good sense at an early stage to copy the Jewish form of government and be Presbyterian! But for more than a thousand years—a millennium—there was only *one great church.* It spread from Palestine along the far-flung roads of Imperial Rome. It made its home in India, in China, in the British Isles and in Germany.

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I stood one day last summer at the Shrine of St. Boniface in Fulda, Germany. There he brought from England the one faith, as it was then, in the seventh century. Fulda's church family is still 95 per cent united.

We are apt to forget that the light of the flame kindled in Palestine rose as a single undivided beacon light until 1054. After that for another half-millennium there were two parallel flames. Then the western church broke up into strands which divided and subdivided bewilderingly. The beacon that was once a solid pillar of light is now more like a shower of sparks! The bursting rocket so blinds our eyes that we no longer remember the undivided light which shone for a thousand years—nor the two-fold light of the succeeding five centuries.

But perhaps you protest: "Even if there was such unity for so long it cannot be again." My comment would be: "Until there is a great group of Christian people, laymen and women, who believe that it can be and who have the will to work for such unity in the spirit of Christ, we shall unfortunately see the ruinous continuance of division. But it is just that, *ruinous.*

ENEMIES OF RELIGION

Think first of the challenges to Christ's way among men. What are they? Indifference? Ancient religions? Not primarily. Indifference is rapidly disappearing in many parts of the world; it seems destined to disappear in many other parts. The ancient religions are less and less of a factor. The Christians have increased by three millions in India in my lifetime. There has been astonishing growth in China. In America, although there were but 6 per cent of the people in the churches in 1800, or four generations ago, there are over 50 per cent in the churches today.

No, the challenges are coming from two rising world religions. One is communism and the other is fanatical nationalism—usually with racial characteristics.

What difference does it make whether Christians unite or not in the face of such challenges? All the difference between defeat and victory for the Christ himself, say many of the wisest men. And what difference does it make whether there is defeat or victory for Christ? At least it means the difference between freedom and bondage—for apart from the influence of the Christian way of life there is *no basic guarantee* either in philosophy or in practice for individual liberty, for the sacredness of conscience, for the spiritual view of personality. Neither communism nor fascist racialistic nationalism cares anything about the rights of the individual. There is no Easter for official Moscow. There is no Easter for official nazidom. The only immortal worthful qualities which communism or fascist nationalism is willing to recognize are attached to a form of the state. To the continuance of this state the individual is a matter of indifference.

Unite or face a world in which such a state embraces increasing millions. Christ or Chaos, Christ or spiritual bondage! Unite or Perish! That is the choice you and I face today. "It looks a remote choice," you say. Yes, but the scenes shift quickly in these days. For our children, and certainly for our grandchildren, it may *not* be a remote choice. My friends in Germany thought in 1930, when we were celebrating the beginnings of the Reformation in Augsburg and Nuremberg, that it was in no sense a choice for Germany. But how differently they feel today! The Prime Minister of Prussia, head of the air force, close and intimate friend of Hitler, has announced that Hitler has done more for the world than "the little Jew who died on Calvary." The Reich Bishop has just rewritten the Sermon on the Mount to make it conform to nazi ideas. To be an uncompromising Christian today inevitably means becoming, from the point of view of the Hitler government, an enemy of the state.

DANGER IS REAL

Such things are utterly unthinkable here, you say. I agree. But they were unthinkable in Germany six years ago. Russia has relaxed certain of the more violent measures against Christians. But the Soviet stands uncompromisingly against the Christian view of the universe, denounces and denies God, ridicules the Christ, and teaches the children to revile his name. That was unthinkable in Russia in 1915. How little did any man who knew Russia about that time or before then believe that the whole Christian view of life was in danger of complete extirpation from the soul of Russia! I was there during the Revolution and I certainly would not have believed any such thing possible. But today in one sixth of the habitable area of the globe, nominally Christian for centuries, the unbelievable change has come. Almost two hundred million people, a tenth of all mankind, are expected to abandon or forego allegiance to the man of Galilee. And as far as one can see their children are doing it, even if some of the adults are not.

What can *we* do about these challenges of communism and Hitlerism? Perhaps you think we can only redouble our personal efforts to practice and to teach the faith which is our most glorious heritage. That we must do. That is basic. Without it no other strategy can be effective. But it is not enough. That in and of itself will not produce concentrated spiritual power. That will not draw together into an effective unity the scattered hosts of Christ's followers. And only a united church will be strong enough to face these challenges.

I hope you will not think me technical or academic if I call your attention to the most significant practical efforts now being made by the churches to overcome the curse of what the English prayer book calls "our unhappy divisions."

NEED OF UNITY

If the prayer of Christ that we may all be one is to be fulfilled, some at least of what is now proposed will have to be realized on a wide scale. My reason for feeling impelled to bring the matter before you is that to be realized it will have to be shared by the rank and file of church people of this and other lands. Leaders are of no use if there be no followers! Leaders alone cannot produce a united Christendom!

Since not more than 2 per cent of the lay members of the churches today read the religious press, and since the daily press of necessity carries only the most sensational or most exceptional news of the religious world, it is through the pulpits of our churches that the story must

be told of what churches collectively are trying to do to achieve a working unity.

The story is not a very long one. Curiously enough it was not until about a generation ago that Protestant Christians began to realize what they had been doing through their readiness to divide over all manner of issues. Every important Protestant church in the United States had split—save the Episcopal and the Congregational—at or before the Civil War. Successive waves of migrations from Europe had brought an ever increasing number of new and relatively small unattached denominations into the total church family of this country.

In Methodist and Presbyterian circles, particularly,

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movements for the reunion of divided denominational families have of late gained headway. A steady process of reunion has gone on since the turn of the century. Eleven important unions have taken place. More are contemplated. The Methodist Commission on unity has a great plan to submit to their General conference this summer. If it goes through we shall have in America a united Methodist church with some eight million members—four times the present size of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. In South India, in Persia, in Scotland, in England, in China and in Switzerland significant unions have recently taken place, embracing from two to sixteen denominations.

All of these steps toward greater unity are along the road of organic unity.

There is another kind which has been moving faster and in the nature of the case can move faster. It is federal unity. In almost every Protestant land in the world it has been growing in recent years. In this country the movement was led in its early stages by such laymen as Dr. J. Cleveland Cady. Out of his efforts and those of William E. Dodge, grew the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America which is, as most of you know, composed of the regularly elected representatives of twenty-five denominations in the United States and Canada.

PROGRESS BEING MADE

When one moves out from the nation to the world at large, both of these trends toward unity can be observed at work. Remember that the one is organic and the other federal! One seeks to merge existing denominations. The other seeks to relate them intimately in federated unity—each keeping its identity. Both movements have been growing in influence in the past decade. Both will gather official delegates of the Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches of the whole world in 1937. Organic unity will be advanced by the World Conference on Faith and Order at Edinburgh. Federal unity will reach a new high water mark at Oxford in the Universal Christian council meeting. The Presbyterian representatives to both of these extremely important assemblies have already been chosen.

Each of these movements (and three others which are likewise the product of the wide desire for cooperation and unity) work in constant consultation with the others. When Christians, alarmed over the state of the world and the divided churches, say: "Why don't the churches get together?" The answer is, they *are* getting together. They are more together now than they have been in five hundred years. But the coming together is mainly *at the top*—through the official leadership of each. The most pressing need is for a speedy widening of the base of cooperation and unity—a spread of the movement into the attitudes and activities of the 350,000,000 Christians who are members of the uniting and cooperating denominations in the Universal Christian council.

Every person who prays sincerely our Lord's Prayer: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done," must see that the answer to that prayer lies in part in the attitude he or she takes toward this process of union or federal unity.

LARGE UNITY EXISTS

The complex divisions of the churches as they are today—speaking more than 950 different dialects, and functioning in over sixty nations—seem baffling to the lover of unity. But that is no reason for discouragement or inaction. When I get discouraged at the rifts which separate, I cheer myself by recalling the kind of basic unity which actually exists.

We are not as much divided as we think we are! See what unities exist: In a total human family of some 1,800,000,000 people, 600,000,000—or about a third—call themselves by the same name "Christian." They all say that they follow the same Master. They pray the same prayer which he gave them. They all read the same sacred book. They have the same essential moral and ethical code. They observe in the main the same ceremonial days. They all worship on Sunday. They sing hymns, many of the same hymns. They all use the rite of baptism. They all celebrate the Lord's Sup-

per, although with variations in the method of celebrating. To say that there can be no essential identity because of differences in forms of expression would be like saying that cordiality is not the same when expressed by handshaking as it is when expressed by a simple bow, as in Japan, or nose-rubbing as in the South Sea islands, or the shaking of one's own hands as in China!

THINKING UNITY

No, we ought to see if we get enough perspective, that the Christians are very much more united in basic things than they are in outward forms or organizations. If they could only acquire the habit of *thinking unity* instead of *thinking diversity* what an access of power their churches would experience! To the man or woman who prays: "Thy Kingdom Come" and who believes in a living and triumphant Christ, the challenge of a divided church will prove a spur to thought and action. Unity can be stressed where it exists and the habit created of finding fundamental unities amid superficial differences. Unity is not something primarily legal or academic. It is something felt, something realized. Curiously enough the British and continental churchmen say that when we have church unity then it will be possible for all Christians to take the communion together. We in America have inter-communion on a wide scale. We *have* the thing they say is unity's chief sign and proof. And we do not think ourselves one! How strange! Would having one general board of managers for a gigantic super-church organization, or one bishop, or one moderator make us feel more united? If so why? Is the letter more than the spirit? Or legal incorporation more than common experience in trying to follow Jesus?

MANY DIFFERENCES INCIDENTAL

We shall be more united when we think of the fact of difference in name or denominational organization as merely incidental. The early church, as I have reminded you, was not afraid of difference or organization or government. It remained one in its thought of itself. Why cannot we regain that kind of unity on a wide scale? We can if enough of us will to do it. The existing organization of the Federal council which links intimately the denominations to which more than half the Protestants in America belong is already a sign and symbol of returning unity. But it would be a vastly more significant symbol and a more effective power for Christ if the people in the churches could only come to realize *that it is theirs and they are in it.* You who belong to this church belong in a very real sense to the larger fellowship which is called Presbyterian. And through its intimate membership in the Federal council, you belong to the still larger communion of which twenty-five denominations are a part. Your own denomination is directly a part of the Universal Christian council on life and work—and you are thus a part of that as well. Why not use effectively and dramatically the unity we already have?

But to use it we must do more than *think* unity. We can definitely work for it. If for instance there were enough demand for it, the Northern and Southern Presbyterian churches would unite in a single great denomination. That demand cannot be expected to come from ministers alone. Laymen and women have to make it vocal, to reinforce it, to insist upon it. Have you noticed the amount of attention given in the press to the action of the Methodist Christian Laymen of the state of New York? They say: "We believe in the possibility of a reunited Protestantism and we are working for it!" That means progress. They propose to begin by promoting unity in Methodism; but they do not expect to stop there. We need more groups of laymen with such a determination.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

I should like in closing to submit a brief reformulation of some of the things I have been trying to say. Consider these practical suggestions and if they appeal to you, try them out in your own way: (1) Remember that the serious divisions of Christendom span less than one third of Christian history. Human nature does not make them inevitable. (2) Cultivate the habit already strong in this congregation of regarding other Christians as fellow members of the Church Universal. In other words make denominational labels into adjectives. They should never be nouns! You are not a Presbyterian. You are a Presbyterian *Christian.* (3) Remember when you think of your church as better than others that 90 per cent of all Christians are in the churches into which they were born and only for that reason think them superior. (4) Look for increasing unity through cooperation in things churches can do better united than they can separate. Strengthen by your interest and help the agencies of cooperation, the local (county) Council of churches, the Federal council, the Universal Christian council. (5) Follow with interest and insight and prayer the world-wide efforts which are leading up to the great church assemblies of 1937, at Oxford and Edinburgh. (6) Exercise your imagination on the problem of making unity possible by talking with your friends about it. Get the consciousness of the need for unity among the churches into current circulation.—Did you even spend an hour thinking hard about the desire of our Master for oneness among his followers and the way to get it? *You* are the church. Ask yourself, "What kind of church would my church be if every member were just like me?"

If you are doing your part to promote unity your conscience need not trouble you when you read the Master's prayer:

> All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. . . . As thou hast sent me into the world even so have I sent them into the world. Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou Father are in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.

Let his words and those of Paul ring in our ears:

> Now there are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit.
>
> And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord.
>
> And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh in all.

Why Worship God?

By Robert Russell Wicks

MULTITUDES of people in the world are in a confused state of mind with regard to the function of worship in the life of today. We shall therefore take time to see what meaning a modern man might find in the ancient injunction which, at the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus set down as central to his whole philosophy of life: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

In the broadest sense that command is not unlike the basic axiom of all science. It suggests that the administration of this universe (however you name it) is superior to the will of any human being. To put any human opinion, or plan or desire in the supreme place, bow to it as infallible and serve it as final is to invite disaster. Last June, when I was speaking at a boys' school at commencement time, the headmaster used an hour before the exercises to drive me in his car through the lovely country side. When we were well along a narrow wood road, where we could neither turn around nor back out, he noticed we were already late for the ceremonies. No sooner had he put on speed, than just around a corner we came upon a little black animal, with a white stripe down his back, squarely in the middle of the road. He ambled along ahead at his own pace for some twenty minutes, holding up the whole commencement program, while an audience of some five hundred people were wondering what had become of the headmaster. Just so when some subordinate part of life usurps the leading place in the middle of the road, it can pretty well disorganize the life we ought to be living.

Thus through long centuries, civilization was deprived of the undiscerned resources of the natural world, because human superstitious opinions were in the way of the supreme laws of nature. Science became our deliverer by teaching the world the religious lesson that the laws of the administration of this physical universe must be recognized as supreme, acknowledged of highest worth, and served by all our intelligence and will with absolute fidelity. Only in that service we find our perfect freedom. There we have the attitude of worship on the purely scientific level.

DESIRES GET IN WAY

On a higher level of life than this with which science deals, it is also possible for our limited interests to assume supremacy, interfere with the highest, and throw life into disorder. We have a curious double sense of reality, as though we lived on the border of two dissimilar worlds. One is the secular world of practical living and achievement which appeals to our desires, the other is the so-called ideal world which commands our admiration with the power of a great persuasion. By ideal I do not mean an imaginary world, but rather the source of all influences which impress us as superior to our best, judge our spirit, stir aspiration and call forth devotion.

The commanding persuasive power of such influences is known to all of us. Once a student discovered that for some years he had been rather unconsciously following his casual desires for anything that seemed good for his happiness at the time, until his life began to seem flat and futile. He was losing interest in his own living. He had a first hand acquaintance with the experience described in the prayer of confession: "We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts and there is no *health* in us"—no right feeling, no wholeness, no sense that everything in one's nature was working together as a unit. But something that was said to him made him realize that in addition to what was good for your desires, "there was something that was good anyway." Even if it interfered with desires, it was still good. Whether you succeeded or failed—still good. If you had to die for it, it would be worth dying for. Once a man was persuaded of the sheer worth of something like that, he felt it would pull a piecemeal life together and make it an entirely different thing. No one arrives at maturity in real living without making the discovery of this supremely persuasive power. It is very vague until we meet it localized in a concrete situation, mixed with natural, ordinary and often unworthy forms of life.

FREEDOM THROUGH DEVOTION

We have seen in personalities we admire that which we would give anything to be, for no external reason and with no need of compulsion or reward. Strange fortification comes to anyone when he has set his heart on something inwardly fine to be, no matter what happens outside. Nothing outside is entitled to receive the submission of our whole life, nothing there can finally satisfy our souls and make us feel at home. The instinct of our race, given time and tragedy enough, will always recover its faith that the greatest thing in the world finds us through the depths of personality. Someone has paraphrased the Apostle Paul's classic description of this inner greatness in these words:

A great person is patient and kind;
A great person knows neither envy nor jealousy;
A great person is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited;
A great person does not behave unbecomingly, nor blaze forth in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs;
A great person finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth;
A great person knows how to be silent;
A great person is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance.
Love never fails.

This inner relation to great life that is a satisfaction in itself, worthy of our complete submission, is what our Christian religion means by a living relation to God. In this sense, not to find God is to be a lost soul in a barren world of physical explanations, external motives and activities that have no ultimate meaning or unity. What profit is there in all the externalities of life if we lose touch with this inner persuasion, winning us to be fair and true and just and fearless, to be friendly, gentle and generous, to respond to beauty and be responsible for people as though all our lives were somehow one?

The hold of Christ upon the human race comes finally

from the fact that He incarnated the persuasive power of that which is supremely beyond our best— a sublimity of spirit such that our minds cannot conceive a higher. Through Him we connect with some ultimate, unsurpassable, challenging reality like God, accessible through the profound depths of human personality, infinitely beyond us and yet forever condescending to our level to constrain us with power.

Let it be emphasized at this point that this ideal realm of influence is not a substitute for the practical, natural sphere of life. The idealistic spirit of a surgeon requires a naturalistic knife for the performance of operations; but the knife likewise requires the right spirit for its master, else it may become a criminal instrument. Ideal influence could never have a chance to operate in the world, except for human prudence which must depend on scientific and political techniques that are independent of what we call religion. All the mechanism of life which science discovers, all the balancing of competing interests in society, all technical skills must stand in their own right as part of the creative system. But the secular practice cannot be a substitute for the spiritual and the ideal.

As a matter of fact terrible things happen as a judgment whenever we ascribe highest worth to this natural level of living, and allow it to be exalted in defiance of the ideal.

CULT OF EMANCIPATION

For instance, see what devastation was left in the lives of people when the cult of emancipation held sway amongst us, putting self-expression in the place of God. Freedom for impulses was the thing of supreme worth which we worshiped. We even tried to train children by setting what they wanted to do above what they ought to do. It was a half-truth usurping the place of the whole truth. The result was inevitable—boredom! When the teacher asked the kindergarten one day: "Now, children, what do you want to do this morning?" a little voice protested "Do I always have to do what I want to do?" In the same vein one of the devotees of the cult of happy thoughts resigned from the fellowship because, he confessed to a friend, he was "tired of being so happy." Perhaps you have met people who lived for their own charm and fascination as the thing of highest worth to them. They offered all their intelligence and gifts to that idol. You have watched them as the novelty wears off in one situation after another, and seen them meet trouble only to crumple into the misery of self-pity, heroically trying to be outwardly charming to cover up an inward bitterness. Our social life is full of such tragic lives.

Or see what happens when, without realizing it, we elevate our class consciousness into the place of our supreme loyalty. We see with the eyes and think with the minds of the people who are our kind, and behave acceptably according to their standards; but when a social problem of vast importance demands something more than the point of view of our economic interest, we become timid and fall hopelessly behind the pioneering minds which dare to think the thoughts which will rule the world twenty or thirty years from now. This class timidity, accustomed to pursuing its own comfortable thoughts as final, reminds one of a story of a certain hunt club where they were wont to ride easily over a prepared course, with bar-ways and ditches nicely arranged for the average rider to follow the hounds as they were led by the scent of a dead fox, carefully dragged along over the conventional fairway. One day a live fox crossed the trail, and the hounds went after it in full cry. Rumor has it that a good many stuffed reputations came to grief where real fences and ditches had to be jumped.

Or consider the result when we put our supreme faith in wealth. What trade and competition and investments demanded of us, their devotees, led us on to human exploitation which we hated as a blatant contradiction to the Christian principles we professed. Something

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equally dangerous occurs when men make faith in their state or race supreme. Freedom of the individual is made a slave to the abstract will of the powers that be, ruthlessly requiring human sacrifice and breeding hate for all peoples devoted to other gods. In the end such worldly faiths drive men on to belief in war as the supreme force. They see that the god of war brings out the heroic elements in men, but only to surrender those grand qualities to the devilish ingenuity of destroying men wholesale and making all our problems worse than they were. It is beginning to dawn upon us that all the secular resources which civilization develops, at the price of sacrifice and high intelligence, may at any time be taken over by unthinking masses who would make use of them for selfish ends, until a cultured world may be at the mercy of the biggest gang with the biggest bully at its head. Without that inner quality that makes men just and honorable and sensitive to the rights of personality, the outward equipment of civilization does

not avail; and the life of men in society becomes subject to devilish forces that insidiously lower its level toward the barbaric, as though the administration of the universe were determined to frustrate, in the long run, the sort of life that repudiates the spirit.

By such experiences and prospects, we can understand why men need some regular discipline to recover themselves from worshiping a human idol of their own making. They must collect their minds away from the practical and immediate, and take time to recognize that which is in eternal contrast to all human plans and authorities, superior to any partial good and supreme in the administration of the universe. To that alone we must attribute final worth and render our final service.

Of the private ways which men have practiced this discipline, the variety is infinite. No man can be his best, unless he submits himself over and over to the power of that which is superior to his best. Each of us must take his own way to do that, or find life dying down on his hands.

FELLOWSHIP IN DEVOTION

But we never can maintain our devotion to the highest in a vacuum. We instinctively seek a fellowship of kindred spirits. We are strengthened through a common devotion, which as little children we learned to share by living in the midst of it. As long as man is man he will develop this common life, which is a shared life, and will grow through the making and remaking of common traditions. Public worship, with all its faults and perversion, arose as man's attempt to keep alive in many people this common devotion to the highest in succeeding generations and over long periods of time. That familiar building with a spire, pointing heavenward, is a symbol reminding us that there is a sublime range of goodness, beauty and truth above all achievements, a supreme administration of this universe above governments, above human hierarchies, above all private and commercial systems and ambitions, above all pride of race and class. The final judgment of what is best is ever there beyond and over-against us.

> Lord God of hosts, be with us yet
> Lest we forget, lest we forget.

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve."

The Church stands guard over that highest of all our moods when we answer to a divine claim from beyond our human best. What we should do to promote this high purpose in worship is not easy to decide. We might follow the simplest fellowship of silence which the Quakers practice, with no symbol at all except that of two or three gathered together in expectancy and submission. But evidently very few people know what to do with their thoughts when silent, unless they have some outward signs and directions to give their minds a channel in which to run. For this reason the widest differences in practice have appeared. At least let us disassociate ourselves from the idea that in worship we are doing God a favor, as though we were pleasing him by a performance which is so often perfunctory at best. It shocks one's sense of reality to suppose that the God of this universe likes to be flattered by little Sunday pageants of praise in his honor. How should we assume to know what God prefers in such matters? We are in church to recall and acknowledge our relation to the supreme and the sublime, which each of us in his own way calls God. We are expecting both to do something and to have something done to us. Since the words of a sermon never can express all we mean by God, we have this other part of the service in which outward forms are used to suggest God, instead of furnishing definitions of Him, who finally defies definition.

But what forms should we use? Some of the recent discussion on a non-sectarian service would logically lead us to eliminate everything that has ever been used in any particular section of the church and so reduce the service to a lecture. We should rather cultivate an appreciation of worshipful practices which have endeared themselves to millions in a long experiment of centuries. Perhaps some of these are in better taste and more lasting than familiar practices we have suffered under in many a hideous church throughout this country. There is, of course, a danger that we love a form as an aesthetic thing, and forget God. But everything good can be perverted.

All our efforts to guide worship might well be based on a study of the first Protestant service, which was a modified form of the Catholic service, and which furnished the basis for the orders which Luther and Calvin and John Wesley originally arranged for use in their churches. We should stand for a more sympathetic understanding of each other's ways, in the interest of fellowship rather than bigoted division. The psychological patterns of many old liturgies are the result of long experience, and are needed to keep us from passing novelties while we try to readjust outmoded expressions to new ideas.

A SUGGESTED RITUAL

We might well begin with great sentences from the Bible that suggest the unutterable difference between ourselves and God who administers this creation in which we find ourselves; and let the choir in a response deepen the mood of wonder and awe as only great music can do it. The mood of common confession could then be given expression. To recognize that we are finally debtors for everything we live by and under obligation to give the best we have, what could better say what needs to be said than the Prayer of Thanksgiving which has been refined by the use of centuries? The language is better, and the suggestiveness is broader, than anything you find in the rambling offhand prayers of some ministers who try to cover the universe each Sunday morning while the congregation bow their heads in sleep. Then, since most people have forgotten the treasuries that lie in the great book which has had more influence on our civilization than any other, a reading, carefully chosen from the Old and New Testaments, connects us with a priceless heritage which we cannot afford to ignore. After that might follow some form of creedal affirmation. If we hesitate to use the customary creed, because people today tend to take a spoken creed too literally, we can substitute a familiar hymn of faith which allows us poetically to express together some last-

ing convictions in song. In musical portions of the service we should not fail to familiarize people with some of the greatest music in the world that originated in the church, carrying such immortal names as Bach and Palestrina. In the prayers it seems fitting to use some set prayers in language that has expressed the common feelings of men for generations, and some free prayer of a more intimate nature, and always a prayer that reminds us of our relation with the whole of humanity, under God. And at the close, we might follow the ancient custom of leaving people's attention focussed on the symbol of the cross, where we are reminded of the eternal price that is being paid to make known what is supremely good and true against the inertia of men's selfish lives.

Such an understanding of worship may help to justify the conviction that the Church has a fundamental part to play in preserving the heritage which was central in the minds of those who founded a nation for free men.

The Reality of God

By John Haynes Holmes

I START my argument this morning at the very bottom—with the simplest and most elementary of all questions, which has to do not with the fact but with the idea of God, not with the reality but rather with the thought of the divine, and with the word, or words, in which thought seeks its outward and vocal expression. Can we use the word, God, to express an idea, without raising any question, for the moment at least, as to whether this idea corresponds to any fact?

In answering this question, I propose to turn to Professor John Dewey, more particularly to the second chapter of his very well-known book, "A Common Faith." I do this not only because Dr. Dewey is one of the supreme philosophical intellects of our time, but also and primarily because he is a humanist, and thus not in any traditional sense of the word a theist. He is a humanist, first, because he rules out of his mind all ideas of the supernatural, which he describes as incredible; secondly, because he limits his thoughts to man and to the processes of man's life in the world that now is; and, thirdly, because he focuses his attention upon the active phases of man's life, thus insisting upon the pragmatic idea that truth is to be tested, in the last analysis, not by the logic of speculation but by the practice of experience. Dewey has little sympathy with the theological mind, with its dogmas, hypotheses and deductive analyses. He insists upon the testimony of life—the life of man, interpreted in natural and not supernatural terms. To accept the viewpoint of such a thinker is to give no undue advantage to the believer. On the contrary, it is to lean over backward, so to speak, in our endeavor to be fair to believer and unbeliever alike.

I am asking, let me remind you, if we can make any use of the idea of God, without raising any question for the moment of the fact. Professor Dewey says we *can!* Indeed, he goes so far as to suggest that we *must,* in the interest of clarity of thought and economy of utterance. He describes religion, one remembers, as "any activity pursued on behalf of an ideal end." Any such activity, he says, "is religious in quality." But ideal ends are many; there are political ends, and social ends, and moral ends, and religious ends. At the same time these ends are unified in their character as ideals, and in their claim upon the allegiance of men's hearts. How may we describe this unity of ideal ends? Why, says Dewey, by the one word, God! Let me quote to you his language:

GOD AS IDEA

The word, God, he writes, "denotes the unity of all ideal ends. It means the ideal ends that, at a given time and place, one acknowledges as having authority over his volition and emotion, the values to which one is supremely devoted, as far as these ends, through imagination, take on unity." The idea of God, he continues, is "one of ideal possibilities unified through imaginative realization and projection."

But this is not all—there is another and deeper aspect of the problem. For these ideal ends, of which we speak, do not exist in a vacuum; they are not confined to any mystic realm of imagination or faith. They are "connected," says Dewey, "with all the natural forces and conditions that promote the growth of the ideal and further its realization. For there are forces, in nature and society, that generate and support ideals. It is this relation between the ideal and the actual to which I would give the name of God."

Such is John Dewey's answer to our question—the answer of the humanist, that we should use the idea of God to express the unity of our ideals and the power that makes them real. The need of such an idea, "in a distracted age," says Dewey, "is urgent."—"It can unify interests and energies now dispersed; it can direct action and generate the heat of emotion and the light of intelligence. Whether one gives the name, God, to this unity is a matter of individual decision. But the function of such an idea seems to me," says Dewey, "to be identical with the force that has in fact been attached to the conception of God in all the religions that have a spiritual content; and a clear idea of this function seems to me to be urgently needed at the present time."

IDEA NOT ENOUGH

So far, so good! There is a place, then, for the idea of God in our thought, and a use for it in our language, whether or not this idea corresponds with any existing reality. If we follow the guidance of this humanist, we shall think and speak of God as at once the goal we seek, and the force we use to drive us to this goal.

But this is not enough. We cannot stop here! At once we face the problem—is this idea real? Is there in the universe any fact of being identical in any way or to any degree with this concept of idealism? God may be an idea which we imagine or conceive, but is God an existence with whom we may communicate and in whom we may live?

The first answer to this question is—Obviously not, if we mean that any conception of ours can match the fundamental reality of divine existence! For if we know anything at all in this world we know that no

finite mind, not even the greatest, can contain within itself, much less project in thought and utterance, the immeasurable ranges of the infinite and the eternal. Here agnosticism has done a priceless work in teaching man humility in the face of what Einstein calls "the incomprehensibility of reality." Here atheism, also, has been invaluable, in tearing down the inadequate and frequently childish notions that have been set up, one after another, as authoritative representations of the divine. That, by the way, is what atheism is—a denial not of God, but of this, that, and the other idea of God as conceived by finite minds! God as the creator of man out of the dust of the ground, God as a ruler of the universe as his royal realm, God as a Father who alternately pampers and punishes his children, God as an answerer of prayer like a slot-machine giving a piece of candy for a penny—all these are absurd ideas, and atheism has proved them so. But atheism is not the final word. It touches ideas of God, but not the fact which may exist behind these ideas. Is there such a fact? Have we reason to believe that there exists, or may exist, however incomprehensible, a reality none the less which constitutes the essential substance of which our ideas, even the most august and wonderful, are but the faintest shadow, or the veriest distortion? We have said that God is that idea of unity which pervades all ideal existence, and the activity which serves such existence. Are there, now, any indications, intimations, suggestions that the universe is at least not inconsistent with such a thought? As Professor Dewey would put it, may we assert, or believe, or surmise, or suspect, that there actually exists "some kind of Being, God, having prior and therefore non-ideal (that is, real!) existence"? *Is there a God?*

ANSWER OF SCIENCE

To find any final answer to this question of fact as contrasted with idea, of reality as contrasted with concepts of reality, we must turn not to theology but to science, for science alone has the method which leads to truth. If there is a God, science will find if not the actual presence, then the sure traces, of his being. It will discern at least the footsteps of the divine upon the sands of time. Let us therefore consult the scientists, and see what, if anything, they have to say upon this question! And when I refer to scientists, let me make plain that I mean the scientists of today and not of yesterday, of the second quarter of the twentieth century and not of the third or fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. Nothing is more lamentable or dangerous, as an intellectual influence, than the man who prides himself on doing all his thinking scientifically, and at the same time has gathered no material for this thinking since the mid-Victorian days of Spencer and Huxley. The changes in scientific ideas and viewpoints, during the last generation, have been amazing, and all in the direction of a comprehension of reality in the midst of mystery which seems to "make all things new."

In the abundant and impressive testimony of our day, I find three basic propositions, to which I would invite your attention:

(1) For the first of these propositions I refer to Dr. Kirtley F. Mather, professor at Harvard University, one of the most distinguished geologists of this country. In his little book, "Science in Search of God," Professor Mather makes announcement that "analysis of the physical universe gives a basis from which to start in the search for God." He finds this basis in the declaration of the physical chemist that matter consists of "molecules formed by the union of two or more atoms." It used to be thought that the atom was the incomprehensible, indestructible, indivisible unit of the material universe. When I went to college, it was believed that this atom was the final residium of reality. What it was, where it came from, what it was doing, nobody was sure, but there it was as the very center or core of being. But now all this is changed. The atom has been divided. In this day we know that an atom is composed of electrons and protons, and that these electrons and protons are themselves the negative and positive charges or units of electrical energy. The apparent mass, form and weight of objects in the physical world are due to the number and arrangement of the electrons and protons within the atom, and to the varying velocities at which they move. In other words, the atom is not a solid and indivisible substance at all, but "an aggregation of swiftly moving units of energy."

UNIVERSE IS LIFE

The philosophical implications of this assertion are not only "obvious," to quote Professor Mather, but enormous. From this point of view the world of sense perception is seen to be nothing more nor less than a manifestation of energy. Matter in itself is neither eternal nor ultimate, but merely a temporary and local expression of energy. "If there is anything ultimate, eternal, absolute," says Professor Mather, "that something must be energy." Therefore does scientific analysis lead inevitably to the conclusion that "energy is the ultimate reality, the eternal verity." But energy is the seed of life! In the long course of evolution, this energy passes over into the higher forms of life, as inanimate passes over into animate, and mineral into vegetable, and animal into human. Which clearly means that at the heart of all things is the vital process! The universe is *Life.*

(2) For the second proposition, I turn to Sir James Jeans, world-famous mathematical physicist, surely one of the ten or dozen greatest scientists now living in the world. This distinguished scholar seeks to understand the movements that control these basic particles of matter which we have just discovered to be units of energy —the relations that exist, in other words, between the electrons and the protons.

LIFE AND MIND

For many years these relations were interpreted in purely mechanistic terms. Matter and mechanism seemed to go together, so that the universe was easily presented as a self-operating machine—an idea which brought order into the universe in terms of law, the kind of law which Herbert Spencer used to describe as "the interaction of matter and force." But now, within the last few years, a great change has taken place. Matter, as we have seen, has disintegrated, or rather been transformed, into energy. This means that the mecha-

nistic pattern no longer fits the picture of the world. If we are to understand, or explain, says Sir James Jeans, what is the nature of reality, we must turn away from mechanism to mathematics. And that's what the scientists of our time are doing! They are interpreting the universe in terms not of material substances and mechanical motions, but of mathematical equations. Albert Einstein, in his colossal work, is trying to reduce all the various equations, wrought out by the various sciences, to one all-inclusive equation which may express the whole truth of all that is. His ideas of relativity, in other words, are only so many factors of a gigantic attempt to work out the final relationship of all objects of reality in a single mathematical formula which will be complete. All of which Sir James sums

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

up in the startling assertion that "the universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine! Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter. We are beginning to suspect that we ought to hail it as the essence of the matter. Not, of course, our individual minds, but the Mind in which the atoms, out of which our individual minds have grown, exist as thought!" The universe is *Thought.*

(3) For our last proposition, I turn to Sir Arthur Eddington, world-famous astronomer of England, one of the half-dozen searchers of the stars in our time whose word is received by all his contemporaries as a word of authority. This scientist accepts, of course, the mathematical formulae which are now unanimously offered as the pictorial presentation of reality, but he is not satisfied with these formulae. He understands what they are, but he wants also to know what they mean. This question, he contends, is not answered by the formulae themselves, for invariably they lead to "a cosmic X"—the great Unknown. But what about man who works out these formulae and now asks what they signify? Nature may be expressed in mathematics, but not man who has himself conceived the mathematical sciences and used them to express the correspondence which exists between the order of nature and the order of his mind. Here is something new in the universe, and yet the product of the universe—a being who conceives thought, who controls and directs thought, who cares whether thought is true, and asks why and how it is true. If ever we are to understand the whole, which Einstein is trying to express in his single equation, must it not be through this creature, man, who is the fulfilment of the whole? For man is as real as nature is real. The inner processes of his life have an absolute existence deeper far than anything contained within the outer structure of his frame. Thus, the thought of "Hamlet" is more enduring than the hand which wrote it on paper which has long since crumbled. The tonal splendor of the Fifth Symphony has a more genuine significance than the strings and wood and brass through which the splendor is revealed. The lights and shadows of a Rembrandt painting transcend anything contained in the physical substance of canvas and paint. The spiritual sacrifice of Jesus on the cross has a reality unknown to the broken bones and the bleeding flesh of his poor body. Yes, the inner is as real as the outer; the spirit of man as basic as the molecules, atoms and electrons of matter. "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

LIFE, MIND, AND SPIRIT

"What is it all about," asks Eddington? "It is no answer to look only at that part of experience which comes to us through sensory organs, and say it is about atoms and molecules. Rather is it about a spirit in which truth has its shrine, with potentialities of self-fulfilment in its response to beauty and right." The mystery is man, and the secret is in man. "Man is the measure of all things," cries the scientist with the poet. The universe is *Spirit.*

Here, now, are three fundamental propositions of reality—three facts disclosed by a scientific survey of the cosmos. The universe is *Life;* the universe is *Thought;* the universe is *Spirit.* But the universe also, in the very nature of the case, is unity! These three things must be one, and therefore must be conceived as one. How may we combine them, and with what word may we describe them?

Dr. Kirtley Mather seems to know the answer to this question, in terms at least of "energy," or Life, when he says—"Could we know its nature in its entirety, we would have at last the complete answer to the quest of Job."

Sir James Jeans seems to make reply, in terms of Thought, when he states that, in order to understand the universe, he finds that he must conceive the existence of "a great Architect of the universe who is a pure mathematician."

Sir Arthur Eddington goes further when he says that the reality of Spirit in the life and work of man reveals the presence of "Him through whom comes power and goodness."

With what word may we describe this unity of Life and Thought and Spirit? That word is—God!

This is as far as I choose to go this morning in this necessarily brief discourse. Of course, it is only a beginning. Beyond there lie far wider realms of vision and experience.

There is mysticism, for example—the vast and beautiful world of mystical illumination. Bertrand Russell, in his new book, "Religion and Science," declares that mysticism contains "a core of wisdom," and "may give something of very great value." John Dewey, in his volume, speaks of mysticism with great respect as one of the "normal manifestations in the movement of experience." It should be surveyed with reverence.

Then there is the realm of prayer and worship, with all its amazing implications of communion between the divine within and the divine without. This realm, wherein theology is transformed into psychology, must be entered and explored in any final quest of God.

Also, there is the realm of ethics, of good and evil, with all its stupendous implications of a divine will at work in the life of the individual and in the history of the race. "A Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness!"

And always there is the far horizon of immortality!

THE FACT OF GOD

But we have gone far enough in our discussion at this time. I have shown that (1) the idea of God has place in our thought, as the deliberate projection of the idealistic imagination; and, further, that (2) this idea is not merely an idea, but a reflection of reality. The universe shows evidence of life, moving through mental processes, to spiritual ends. Behind the idea, in other words, there is a fact. Which gives answer to our question! Is there a God? *There is.*

In a remarkable statement on the ultimate significance of astronomy in our day, Dr. Robert Grant Aitken, Director of the Lick Observatory at Mt. Hamilton, California, winner of the Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society (1932), speaks of the universe as "an organic whole." Referring to the revelations of this "organic whole" in the motions, and in the laws that govern the motions, of the heavenly bodies, he sums up his basic conclusions in these solemn words:

"That the mind of man has been able to reach these great generalizations and through them to attain to the power of prediction is proof of order and rationality in the universe. It is a universe, in my belief, with thought and more than thought within it; a universe that is the expression of an immanent infinite Spirit. I find myself in complete sympathy with Walt Whitman when he writes,

Give me, O God, to sing that thought,
Give me, give him or her I love, this quenchless faith
In Thy ensemble; whatever else withheld, withhold
not from us
Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space,
Health, peace, salvation universal.
Is it a dream?
Nay, but the lack of it a dream,
And failing, life's lore and wealth a dream,
And all the world a dream."

Going Ahead Of Jesus

By Guy C. Tetirick

After that the Lord commissioned other seventy disciples, sending them in front of him two by two to every town and place that he intended to visit himself. Luke 10:1. (Moffatt.)

THE commissioning of the Seventy was the first great and crucial test applied by Jesus to the new religion which he came to give hungry human hearts. To me it is one of the turning points of history. Its importance lay not with Jesus, but with men. He would not, he could not fail. They might. This test would prove whether civilization, culture, humanity itself had reached a stage of interest and devotion where a great missionary passion could be sustained. He had a right to test his friends. They had been with him for some time. It was fine to look into his face and to catch his spirit. It was glorious to serve with him in the ministrations to the multitudes. There was caste to be had in company like his. He was a popular prophet in those early days. Important people of the world sought his aid through them. And so the moment of the great test came. He did not select the Twelve. Perhaps if this initial mission failed they would be too severely crushed to survive. And so he took seventy ordinary, rank-and-file, mill-run followers, just like any of us, and sent them out on their own. It was a daring thing to do, but the test had to be made. He deemed the time now opportune.

THE ANCIENT COMMISSION

Jesus is eternally modern. The methods of campaigning and all the psychology of salesmanship in vogue today were used by Jesus. The Seventy were divided into teams of two to buttress one another's faith and courage when it waned. How unique and yet how unreasonable were the instructions which he gave these thirty-five pairs as they went ahead of him into these cities and places which he himself intended to visit some time. There were risks in this commission. But the daring of youth is always great. "I am sending you out like lambs among wolves," he said. How explicit he was. There must be no baggage to worry about. They were to go stripped for the action of a great endeavor. No wallet carrying the necessaries for the journey. Not even a spare pair of sandals in a time when foot travel was most common. No purse was to hang from their girdles to tempt the covetous eye of a thief and consume the anxieties of the owner. As they journeyed they were to salute no one lest idle conversations about the weather and politics, should militate against the importance of their message. Nothing should delay them or deter them from the immediateness of their mission.

So they went forth. And they went just as some of us have gone forth on church budget, community fund and "Y" campaigns. Some of these pairs, no doubt, moved down the highway with eagerness to be at their task. Others perhaps walked with slower pace, wondering among themselves whether the time was opportune, the mission essential; whether they would be cordially received; whether the goal was beyond attainment;

whether they would ever get back alive after a few frays with those wolves ahead.

It was a strange injunction Jesus gave them about their itinerating. (That is a good Methodist word.) When they went into a city they were to make one house their headquarters. They might be busy elsewhere during the day with the ministrations of the Good News, but there was to be at least one house in each city which should have that demonstration of Christian character which can be given only under the shelter of a home roof. Jesus counted on that lesson to change the lives of people. He does today. Their message was not to be doom, but Good News. A message of transcending joy—"the kingdom of God is near you." Then they told the people about Jesus and what he had done for them. It was simple but sufficient. Men believed. Lives were changed. The diseased, filled with a transcending faith, were healed. The dull, depressed and discouraged had a new light in their eyes and their hearts. Men and women knew that the kingdom of God was near them, and they began to live now as citizens of that kingdom.

THE MISSIONARIES RETURN

Nothing in the Scripture reveals it, but the Seventy and the Lord must have had a rendezvous at an appointed time and place. What a thrilling moment it was as the day for the report drew near! Even the Twelve could hardly understand Jesus' apprehension. Perhaps they saw only a futile mission given to untried and ill-proven disciples. That little inner circle found fault so frequently. Their jealousy and lust for position and power on so many occasions could lend little sympathy to this the first missionary demonstration of an organized and commissioned group of the Christian faith.

But at last here they came down the highways and pathways converging at that spot. There was an elasticity in those steps not noticed when they departed. There was a hastening that revealed an eagerness to tell of good tidings. The sandals of some had worn thin, but bruised feet could not delay hearts filled with triumph. With breathlessness they told everything that had happened. It was a spectacular demonstration of power. Demons had been subject unto them. They took no note of the changed lives of men, of passions conquered, of home life made sweet and trusting, of men dealing justly in all the affairs of life. But how gentle he was with those missioners loaded with human frailities and petty interpretations of success. How like them we are ourselves at times. They were not to rejoice because spirits obeyed them. They were to be happy because they had been privileged to tell the Good News, and men had heard and believed. It was for that reason that their names were to be enrolled in heaven.

TODAY'S NEW CALL TO THE CHURCH

This sermon would be just a mere narrative of an experiment in the ministry of Jesus if we were to close here. But such is not our purpose. The church of our day has been greatly concerned about going back to Jesus to trace his footsteps, about traversing the tortuous maze through the prejudices of the centuries to find out just what the early church did and why they did it. Well, suppose we do find out what they did and why they did it? Of one thing I am certain—it was an adaptable gospel—adaptable to different peoples in different times. Antiquity is not the main criterion of holiness to me. Christian courage and high valor of faith and action are the supreme tests in these adventurous days. No harking back with solemn warnings and pious phrases will now save our generation and those to come.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

I firmly believe that ours is one of those rare generations thrust out by God to try our faith in new realms of experimentation in service to mankind and for the glory of our Maker. It is into new fields of human rela-

GUY C. TETIRICK

tions that we are moving with great rapidity. Our chief concern must be to have the mind of Christ rule in these new spheres; to have the constitutions, codes and laws work for the good of all. If not, dictatorship will prevail and democracy will be stifled. We may yearn to follow Jesus as the Seventy must have longed to do when they realized that they were out on their own. No longer were his footsteps to be seen and his counsel invoked. Only the memory of his fellowship and the urgency of their mission remained. They were pioneers of the kingdom of God. Jesus was eventually to follow in their steps when he came to these cities. He must find that they had done well.

The joyous warning and invitation of the Seventy should suit us well today. "The kingdom of God is near you." In certain epochs the church has been greatly concerned over the second coming of our Lord. This delusion, from Paul to the present, has been stultifying to missionary and social passions. Jesus said

that only his Father knew when the end of the ages would come. Why worry about the signs of a distant event? One stern truth is quite real, and that is that you and I are not to be here long. Life after all is brief. So we should be about our Master's business with eagerness and joy. Our nation, our state and our generation have surely been thrust out into a new world into which Jesus must some time come—unseen, but not unsensed. He is anxious to visit us to see how his modern disciples are changing this world today by the power of his matchless life and gospel. New landmarks in human relations are being set today, as men of courage and faith set the old ones. Sighing for the past has never stemmed the tides of change when new values and human worths are being established. We must use the resources with which it provides us to create the new order.

WILL CHRISTIANITY MOLD TOMORROW?

Shall the church lead in these adventures? Or shall she be compelled later to accept them as she has in the past? Jesus took a chance on the Seventy. Can he count on you and me and the church of today to go forward with courage into disputed realms where greed and selfishness, lust for power and petty nationalisms rule the day? Will Christianity mold the tomorrows, or will the present be conformed to the powers of this world. To me a free church and a free people are synonymous. Here is found freedom in its largest and noblest sense. Any other course for these or later days is futile and impotent.

The most marvelous picture of Jesus in the gospels is that presented at the conclusion of the report of the Seventy. "He thrilled with joy at that hour in the Holy Spirit." We have many pictures of Jesus—the nativity, the flight into Egypt, the lad in the temple, the carpenter of Nazareth, the baptism at the Jordan, the call of the Twelve, the Sermon on the Mount, the feeding of the multitude, the tears at the tomb of Lazarus, the triumphal entry, the fury with the money-changers, the last supper, Gethsemane, the betrayal, the judgment hall of Pilate, the crucifixion, the descent from the cross, the risen Christ, the mount of the ascension. But the artist is yet to live, who with consecrated talent and vision can portray the Christ thrilling with joy in the Holy Spirit. I would that I might see his face and rejoice in the glory of it.

But ours has been a generation of terrific slaughters and more terrible and lasting hatreds. Seeds of future wars seem to be germinating. Industrial conflicts are multiplying. Will higher value continue to be placed on things rather than upon men and human rights? Or will those higher values of Christ win? Will things and the machines which spew them be subservient to the minds and hearts of men? Will that ancient Christmas carol of peace on earth finally still the drums of war and the furies of hate? Do we still have an expectant Lord who has sent us out into a ripened harvest of opportunity? Are we an expectant church filled with the power of good works and high faith? Can we make Jesus Christ thrill with joy in the Holy Spirit at this our moment in human history? What a day in which to live for God and humanity!

The Good Earth

By Coningsby M. Gordon

Then I saw another strong angel descend from heaven; he was clad in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head. . . . He set his right foot on the sea, his left upon the earth. . . . Revelation 10:1, 2.

A CELESTIAL figure of heroic stature standing with his feet on the good earth and his head among the rainbows—what an arresting piece of symbolism! I could not, with any degree of confidence, attempt to unfold the original meaning of the symbolism. That I leave to those wizards whose uncanny genius enables them to read as an open book all prophetic utterance and apocalyptic imagery. But while in doubt about the original meaning of the picture, I have no difficulty in catching the fine suggestion it has to offer for triumphant living in our modern world.

A problem of the first magnitude confronting all who take life seriously is this: How adjust oneself to the claims of the material on one side and of the spiritual on the other? How strike a true balance between life's stern realism and its challenging idealism? How live as a loyal denizen of the kingdom of earth and a loyal citizen of the kingdom of heaven? We have all felt the challenge and the difficulty of this problem. Here is this world, there is the other; here is the practical, there is the ideal; here is Caesar, there is God; here is time, there is the timeless—how bring into the unity of a well-ordered victorious life the distinctive loyalties belonging to each? With the weight of this problem bearing down upon us it will be well for us to focus our eyes upon this fascinating figure, this messenger from God, standing with one foot upon the land and the other upon the sea—that is, with both feet firmly planted on our planet, the good Earth—and with his head aloft among the rainbows. For that precisely is how we should live—our feet firmly grounded on the good earth and our heads high and lifted up among the rainbows.

TWO PERILS

As my vision is held by this heavenly visitant my soul becomes keenly sensitive to two perils—a sinister Scylla on one side, a cruel Charybdis on the other. First there is the peril of an unnatural and unspiritual detachment from the good earth. By some strange process of self-levitation many try to lift themselves off the earth. Unlike this epic angel, they are not standing firm-footed upon the earth. Unlike God, they apparently are unwilling to have the earth as the footstool of their feet. It would be well for all such to heed the warning of that old story, coming to us from Greek mythology, of the desperate fight between two picturesque demigods, Hercules and Antaeus. Antaeus gave magnificent account of himself and proved invincible so long as his feet maintained vital connection with the good earth. But when Hercules, by subtle strategy and sheer strength, broke that connection, Antaeus went down to crushing defeat. That myth is no fantastic yarn; it is a true parable of life.

If I mistake not Antaeus was the son of Terra—the Earth. We too are her children. From the day of birth till the day of death she mothers us. And mother earth is the good earth. I would have you stress the adjective as we approach the Thanksgiving season. She is the Good Earth—I cry it aloud, not only as I walk through her green pastures and by her still waters, not only as I stand in sight of her "purple mountain majesties" and richly "fruited plains," but as I gaze across her drought-stricken prairies or face her raging storms. Her beauty not only inspires our artistic creations but would build itself into the structure of our souls. If our intelligence and disposition were but equal to her bounty she would give every man, woman and child in the world enough and to spare. Her rough and rugged places, her deserts and her droughts, her difficulties and her disciplines, would produce in us an impressive splendor of character —heroic yet humble, mighty yet merciful, tough yet tender, sublime yet simple. It is impossible to conceive a finer school for the culture of that kind of character worth perpetuating through eternity than this good earth on which and through which we live and move and have our being.

REALISTIC FAITH

In our faith and in the optimisms and idealisms that spring from it, we need to keep our feet on the solid earth. A faith, for instance, that is not rooted in reality, that is afraid to look facts in the face, that spurns those laws which God has made structural in nature, has no firm footing on the good earth. It is a faith that is too upish to have dealings with the earth, too smug and self-satisfied to be on friendly terms with reality. Such an unearthly faith often degenerates into a sad composite of ignorance, cowardice and superstition. A fitting symbol of it would be that celebrated Hindu who beheld the repulsive filth of his sacred river through a microscope and promptly, in a blaze of anger, smashed the instrument! His foolish head may have been far up among the rainbows but his feet assuredly were not in contact with earth.

Our optimisms, too, must maintain a vital connection with the earth, otherwise they may evaporate into a wild orgy of wishful thinking. When first I came to this city, a prominent citizen, whose calling was real estate, told me that within five years the population of Norfolk would pass the million mark. Eight years have come and gone and our population has registered little or no increase. You see, his optimism was not rooted in reality. And if our visions and our idealisms are to issue in something more substantial than fair cities floating in the clouds they must maintain a healthy organic nexus with real life upon our realistic earth.

A book has recently appeared entitled "Our Unexpected Slums." The author of the Introduction confronts us with these bold words: "I would warn you against this dangerous book. If you love your rose-hued spectacles—if your peace of mind depends upon not knowing how other people live—then thrust it from you." Our rose-hued spectacles—were we not looking at America through them in 1928 and the years immediately preceding? We saw America entering her golden age. Everybody was rich or rapidly becoming so. We talked big, the word billions bulking large in our speech. Then came the inevitable judgment. Ten thousand banks cracked and crashed. Fifteen million people lost their jobs. The cry of hunger arose throughout the land and sad and bedraggled bread lines extended from our Dan to our Beersheba. What we thought was real wealth, as we looked at it through our rose-hued spectacles, turned out to be but paper wealth, fictitious and illusionary. We had left the good earth and were off on a mad excursion among the rainbows. And, sad to say, not even our rainbows were real; they were but the irridescent reflection of our own multi-colored illusions. I am afraid of financial systems that are based chiefly upon paper and inflation, of a faith that hasn't the courage to look an honest fact in the eye, of an optimism that can see only sunshine ahead, of an idealism whose programs and panaceas are going to remake the world overnight.

And not infrequently has the church exhibited a burning desire to cut adrift from the good earth and go soaring among the rainbows like a balloon without ballast. She seems at times to have made the good earth synonymous with the evil world—a really tragic mistake. Influenced by Greek thought, which established an unbridgeable dualism between matter and spirit and taught that matter was inherently evil, it developed Gnosticism with its diverse schools, and Asceticism with its marvelous miscellany of anchorites, hermits and monks. Gnosticism is a gallant effort to get God off the earth, while Asceticism is an equally gallant effort to get man off the earth. The earth is evil, therefore God sustains no relationship to it. Marcion absolved God from all responsibility for the material universe by making it the work of the Demiurge, while Valentinus lifted God into an infinite transcendence, separating him from the material universe by his labyrinthine and fantastic succession of "aeons" and emanations. Even the fleshly body of our Lord was resolved into the thin air of docetic fancy and the Incarnation diluted into mere illusion.

DENIALS OF THE GOOD EARTH

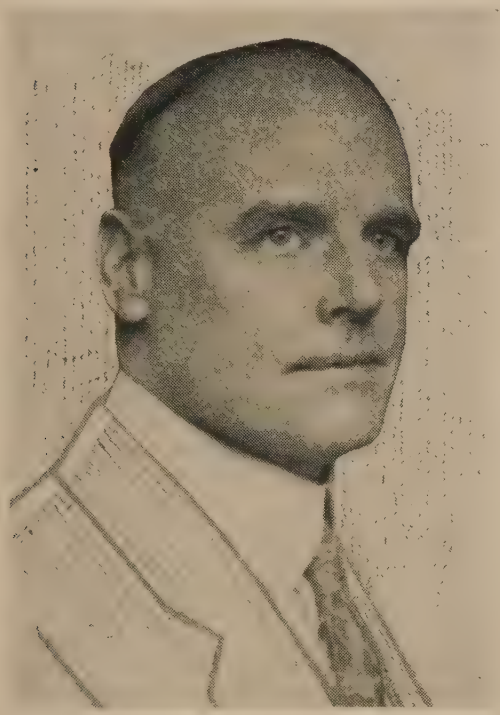
The orthodox church, of course, condemned Gnosticism as heresy, but placed the stamp of its approval upon Asceticism. But if Gnosticism is a heresy of thought, Asceticism is a heresy of life. It represents the most strenuous and excruciating effort on the part of man to run away from the good earth. It is true that the church as a whole did not become ascetic; not all its members ran off to the caves or inured themselves in monasteries. But the church as a whole did canonize the ascetic ideal and regard its tub saints and pillar saints and cave saints and monastic saints as its holiest saints. From the view-point of the time, Jane Addams, building a bit of the kingdom of heaven down among the slums, Albert Sweitzer medicating the wounds and the sorrows of the black people of Lamberene, or Wilfred Grenfell writing the Christian epic of Labrador, would represent a vastly inferior type of sainthood.

Now while Gnosticism as a school of thought has long perished, its influence has presisted practically to our own day in the over-emphasis of God's transcendence at the expense of his immanence. And while the Asceticism of which we have been thinking has either

gone altogether or been profoundly modified, its influence has persisted to our time in the tenacious way in which the "other world," at the expense of this world, has commandeered our imagination and our faith. Husky men, in the prime of physical manhood, with voices like the seven thunders, are still singing:

I long to leave these fading scenes
That glide so quickly by,
And join the shining host above,
Where joy can never die.

Thus have we set our desire to get off the good earth to the music of many ardent hymns and sung them with gusto round the globe. Such incongruity might be laughable were it not for the fact that the concentration of our religious interest and aspiration upon the other



CONINGSBY M. GORDON

world has proved a massive hindrance to the spread of God's Kingdom in this.

But in our desire to avoid sinister Scylla let us not be wrecked on cruel Charybdis. If we stand in peril of losing contact with the good earth, we stand in still graver geril of losing sight of the rainbows. If the temptation to go roaming and romancing among the rainbows is strong, the temptation to go groveling among the materialisms of life is stronger. It is much easier to lose sight of the other world than of this. The pressure of the material is tremendous and yielding to it we too often miss the rainbows and justify Wordsworth's pointed censure:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.

How much wiser to maintain the triumphant posture of this mighty angel—to stand on top of the world, not it on top of us, to hold our heads aloft among the rainbows and the stars and thus express the heavenly control of earthly things, the spiritual mastery of life.

DENIALS OF THE RAINBOW

Thousands of our fellow pilgrims are traveling over life's highway heavy-footed and heavy-hearted as though life itself were but a treadmill kind of existence—its drama descended into drudgery, its poetry curdled into prose, its romance buried amid pitiless routine, its music mastered by monotony. They are earth-bound and rainbow-blind. And so are those phlegmatic mortals whose "too, too solid flesh" has blunted all finer sense, coarsened emotional response, killed all artistic appreciation, and made chronic and incurable that fearful affliction known as fatty degeneration of the soul. With a master touch of genius the poet, in three simple lines, has set forth the symptoms:

A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And nothing more.

It's that fatal "nothing more" that differentiates and identifies this unfortunate class. Niagara nothing more than so many ergs of energy, the Grand Canyon nothing more than a jagged tear in the ground, a noble symphony nothing more than a jangle of noises, a glorious sunset nothing more than red pigment plastered on the sky, man nothing more than a machine, sex nothing more than a biological urge, a woman's tears nothing more than a saline solution, the soul nothing more than a glandular secretion or a figment of disordered fancy! Ah the tragedy of it all!—man burrowing in the earth like a wombat instead of using it as a base from which he can reach the rainbows and the stars.

MATERIALISTIC WORLD-VIEW

Our science has often been blind to the rainbows. True it has explained the rainbow in terms of refracted light and spectrum colors, but in the lovely artistry of the rainbow it has failed to find the artist. Science has had much to say about the flowers and the trees, but often has failed to see the smile of God in the beauty of the lily and to hear the murmur of his voice in the tree tops. It has gone on the most breath-taking excursions among the heavenly bodies without discovering Heaven. It has found law woven into the very texture of the universe but failed to find the lawgiver. It has explored the cosmos without coming face to face with the creator. And while astronomy has been busy weighing Betelgeuse in a balance and compelling Antares to yield up the secrets of its structure, much of our recent psychology has been discounting the astronomer—persuading us that he who has performed these miracles is nothing more than a sort of vitalized robot, responding in automatic fashion to mechanical stimuli. Our science has too long been dominated by a materialistic and mechanistic philosophy. Its feet have been on the earth but its head has not been among the rainbows. Happily it is now sounding a new note. The archangels of modern science—such men as Michelson, Eddington, Jeans and Einstein—are finding the basic thing in the uni-

verse to be mind, thought, spirit, if you will. They are laying a thoroughgoing scientific foundation for a spiritual faith.

Our social and economic systems have often been blind to the rainbows. Too often have they been of the earth, earthy and not of the heaven, heavenly. Here we see the basic weakness in the economic revolution proceeding with such boldness and vigor in Russia. I am told that last summer Stanley High directed the attention of a young Russian to a glorious rainbow that overarched the wheat fields of the Ukraine. The young fellow replied impatiently: "We haven't any time for rainbows in Russia!" That reply epitomizes the structural defect in the Russian program. It is totally devoid of rainbows. It regards man simply as a son of man, not as a child of God. It begins on earth and ends on earth. As long as it deletes the spiritual factors from personality and descries no higher destiny for man than the dust, I feel that it holds no happy or lasting solution of the human problem. No social paradise, no enduring economic emancipation can come without religious motivation, without spiritual dynamic. Not only Russia, but America and every other country in the world needs to lay this vital principle to heart. The intense secularization of life, the dominance of the money motive in our industrial structure, the tenacious persistence of the unspeakable war system so ardently nurtured by haughty nationalisms and by the merciless "merchants of death," the sordid slums producing pestilence and profitable rentals, the poisons of racial hate and class cleavage, and the fact that at so many vital points Christendom rides rough shod over Christianity are evidence enough that our civilization is too earth-centered, that it is largely blind to the rainbows and largely deaf to the voice of God; that the spiritual forces which should guide our social living are largely mastered by material factors. We must reverse the order. The soul must have a firm control of the body, the spiritual must master the material, our noblest idealism must be translated into the realism of life, the blood of heaven must flow by transfusion into the life of earth, the spirit of God must quicken and energize and direct the affairs of men as individuals and a society.

THE GOOD EARTH FULFILLED

Then will our parliaments be places in which the laws of God are written into the statutes of men. Our factories and our mills will be theaters of brotherly industry in which Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth, would be happy to carry on his labor. Our courts will be temples of legal purity, of impartial justice tempered with the spirit of mercy. Our homes will be citadels of stainless honor, of unbroken faith, of radiant happiness and of unfading and unsullied love. Our schools will be centers of creative culture in which noble character and efficiency for human service are the chief ends of the educative process. Our churches will be ministering agencies of the Kingdom of God on earth, promoting spirituality, challenging the people to faith and hope and universal love, and building into the soul of our nation self-control, moral dignity, fine poise and high courage. And the good earth will indeed be what God intended it should be—the very gate of heaven.

Seek Ye First the Kingdom

By Earl Frederick Adams

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Matthew 6:33.

ONE of the most important factors in the life of any individual is the question of his dominant desire. His character, his goals, his vocation and his most vital choices will all be determined, at least in large measure, by the nature of his foremost aspiration or the thing which he craves above all else.

Our text bears directly on this fundamental question. In the midst of a world which lays before mankind a vast array of possible goals and motives, we dare to stand and repeat those challenging words with which Jesus depicted the thing which should be most compelling in the life of any true disciple—"Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

THE PRIMACY OF THE QUEST

There can be no doubt as to the primacy of this quest in the mind of Christ. His parables of the kingdom, his sermons and prayers and his very way of life make it perfectly clear to the honest and sincere Christian that the quest for the kingdom must take precedence over all else. Lesser goals may be good, other desires may be all right in their place, but the good is not enough and the second best will not suffice. Loyalty to the highest is a prime obligation of the true Christian, and lesser loyalties are commendable only as they are properly subordinated to the highest. We must seek first and above all else the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Among the parables which Jesus used to portray the nature of the kingdom there is one which bears directly on this question of primacy. "The kingdom," said Jesus, "is like unto a pearl of great price" for the possession of which the wise merchant would sell all that he had. Other pearls may be quite all right. Other values may be properly desired but seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness and the other things will be added unto you.

Then let us be honest with ourselves and with each other. The crux of the whole matter we are considering rests on that little five-letter word "first." Of course we desire the kingdom, but is it really our dominant desire? Naturally we seek the kingdom, but do we seek it first? We find it easy to repeat shibboleths about the reign of righteousness, but we do not wish that righteousness to be purchased at our expense. Few there are among us who flagrantly label themselves as opponents of the kingdom or openly ally themselves with the forces of iniquity. To seek God's kingdom is not particularly difficult so long as the search is secondary or incidental to the other interests which dominate the lives of most men. But to seek it *first*—that is the test. That is where we fail, for in the mind of the Master he who does not seek the kingdom first does not really seek it at all.

In one of his recent sermons, Dr. Fosdick made ref-

erence to an interesting experience in the life of Whistler, the famous painter. It seems that a friend of the painter had purchased a masterpiece of art but was having difficulty in finding the appropriate place to hang it. Finally he called in Whistler and asked his frank advice. The painter having studied the masterpiece and having surveyed the room in which his friend wished to have it placed, remarked, "You cannot expect that picture to look right in this room, for the room and the picture do not harmonize. If you wish to have the picture you will have to change the room."

SOME MODERN MOTIVES

That is the sort of dilemma in which we find ourselves relative to the kingdom of God. If we really wish to have it, some other things will have to go. Let us therefore analyze briefly some of the prevailing motives of our day which nullify and defeat any vital attempt to establish the kingdom of God on earth. These lesser motives can be rather loosely grouped under four very common philosophies of living, described at least in their dominant nature by the appellations of Hedonism, Egoism, Opportunism and Cynicism. These things we must renounce if the kingdom is ever to come.

The Hedonist considers the pursuit of pleasure as the thing of prime importance, the end and aim of all living. That which brings pleasure is good. That which brings pain is evil. A simple philosophy on the surface of things, but how shallow it becomes in the light of the cross! "Seek ye first the enjoyment of pleasure," is a hollow command when you come to contemplate the glory of him "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross." The joy of the Christian is rooted in something far more abiding than the hedonistic goal of passing pleasure.

The Egoist thinks of life as good or bad just to the extent that it ministers to him. His philosophy is that of a completely self-centered existence and is a direct contradiction of the true Christian spirit. The Egoist soon wears out the capital "I" on his typewriter and is monotonously concerned about *his* goods, *his* achievements, *his* problems and *his* life. Let the Egoist seek first the kingdom of God by hearkening to the advice of the Master who said, "He who loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

OPPORTUNIST AND CYNIC

The Opportunist is one who, according to the dictionary, "seeks immediate advantage with little regard for principles or ultimate consequences." We hear much these days about political opportunists who have their eyes on the ballot box and their ears to the ground for the first rumblings of the mob. But the Opportunists are not all politicians. In every walk of life we find them—industrialists and laborers, capitalists and white-collar workers. Even the church itself has sometimes been disgraced by this shortsighted attitude and the ranks of the sacred ministry have harbored all too many timid Opportunists. Oh, for more men with the courage of the prophet Micaiah who refused to yield to this subtle temptation and cried out in courageous honesty, "Whatsoever the Lord sayeth unto me, that will I speak." A philosophy of opportunism will never lead us to go out in earnest quest of the kingdom of God.

The Cynic is one of the most deadly enemies of the kingdom. The psalmist of old described him well as the man "who sitteth in the seat of the scornful." He is so steeped in the concerns of a materialistic and covetous world that he simply ridicules anyone who talks of the kingdom. The apostle of righteousness appears to him as an unpractical idealist and a dreamer of dreams. The Cynic will not argue the theoretical values of the kingdom of righteousness. He chooses rather to laugh them out of court as hopelessly utopian. He lives in a mental world which allows no vision of social possibilities, takes no account of the power of moral forces and permits no vital faith in the reality of God. "The kingdom would be fine, oh yes, but why waste one's life in a hopeless quest?" says the Cynic. This is a deadening philosophy of life, and those who love the seats of the scornful will never find their way to the kingdom of God.

PREREQUISITES OF THE KINGDOM

However, the prevalence of Hedonism, Egoism, Opportunism and Cynicism is not the only deterrent to the quest. Even among those sincerely committed to the kingdom the search is often futile and discouraging. This is partly due to the fact that certain presuppositions which are basic to the kingdom have not been fully accepted by our generation and the vision of the kingdom is blurred to all who fail to see clearly some of the major problems which are involved. Jesus did not argue about these presuppositions. He rather took them for granted.

The first prerequisite for kingdom service is a consciousness of the reality of God. How blithely we talk of the kingdom of God! And yet our churches are peopled with bewildered souls for whom God Himself is anything but a reality. We cannot here discuss the nature of God but simply state that as a prerequisite of an earnest quest of the kingdom of God the individual must arrive at some conception of the Divine Being which is for him vital and real. Otherwise we are urging supreme loyalty to a vestigial kingdom in which the King is dead.

As a second condition of the reign of God's righteousness devotees of the kingdom must accept the fact that this is a moral universe wherein "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We are loath to make this frank acceptance. What do we expect to reap as a result of some of our sowing? We may concede a partial working of moral law in the realm of individual conduct and behavior, but what about our activities as groups and our collective defiance of the basic laws of righteousness? We complain of our present economic ills and social maladjustments, but what did we expect to reap when we went out to sow war and hatred, selfishness and prejudice, greed and jealousy, oppression and injustice. This *is* a moral universe, and until we recognize that the quest for God's kingdom places upon us a responsibility for group morality as well as of individual righteousness, we shall never reach the goal which we profess to seek.

A further prerequisite of the kingdom is the frank acknowledgment that we live in an increasingly inter-

dependent world. There is a sense, of course, in which we may rightly speak of independence. We have, however, confused the issue by seeking that as a goal. Our incessant talk about economic independence is for the most part based on a false and inadequate conception of the very world in which we live. As a matter of fact we can never be independent, either as individuals or groups, unless we choose to isolate ourselves on some ocean island or live in the manner of primitive hermits. Those who boast most loudly of their economic independence are in all too many instances among the most dependent individuals on the face of the earth. We are interdependent people, and that is exactly as it should be in the kingdom of God. The greatest rewards of living are in store for those who learn to live and work

Earl Frederick Adams

together. No one man can build a skyscraper, operate a great industry, manage an educational institution or conduct the affairs of state. Think for the moment of a great ocean liner where every man has his job, and you will realize that the larger the liner the greater is the interdependence of all. So it is with this world in which we live. We must frankly recognize our complete interdependence as individuals and as neighborhoods, as industries and as nations. Policies of narrow isolationism will never lead us to the kingdom of God. The quest for the kingdom must take us down the broad highway of brotherhood and cooperation.

A fourth prerequisite of the kingdom of God is the honest recognition of our human inequality. This fact of inequality between men and between nations makes the kingdom a necessity. We in America are especially fond of quoting the statement that all men are created equal. That is a noble statement when understood as referring to the value of one's soul in the sight of God. In most respects, however, it is perfectly obvious that all men are not created equal. We are not equal in our physical strength, our mental inheritance, our native abilities or our powers of achievement. Jesus never taught that all men were created equal. Some men had five talents, others had two, and others had one. Builders of the kingdom of God must frankly recognize that equal opportunity is not a sufficient panacea for the ills of the world. The strong must aid the weak and the mighty must bear the burdens of those who are helpless. Jesus never argued about this matter. He took it for granted, and urged upon men the motivation of love which alone is able to cope with this baffling problem.

Thus far we have considered the prime importance of the quest for God's righteousness and a few of the prerequisites we must have in mind if the search is to be intelligent and sincere. We are now face to face with the most critical factor of all—namely, the question as to whether or not we are willing to pay the price.

THE PRICE OF THE KINGDOM

We have already referred to the parable in which Jesus described the kingdom as "the pearl of great price" for which a man should be willing to sacrifice all that he has in order to obtain it. Now let us be honest with ourselves and frankly admit that most of us simply are not willing to pay such a price for the kingdom. Jesus gave his very all and we love him for it. When, however, it comes to the matter of our willingness to do likewise we suddenly begin with one accord to make excuse. Of course, we would like to own a few shares of stock in this kingdom business and be assured of our own reward when the dividends are distributed, but as for investing everything in the venture—that is a different thing. We covet the "pearl" but the "price" is too great. Therefore, we cannot possess it. Only a fool risks everything in one venture, and while we may be willing to appear bold and courageous, we shrink from any appearance of foolhardiness. Even Jesus must appear foolish when judged by the cautious rules which we quite generally accept as "the better part of valor."

The price of faith is, then, the first cost of this venture. In spite of ridicule, in the face of misunderstanding, in the very presence of crumbling ancient ideals we must reaffirm our faith and proclaim our gospel. We find it easy to *pray* for the kingdom—to *believe* in the kingdom is a far more difficult thing.

OBEDIENCE TO WILL OF GOD

A further part of the price to be paid is indicated by Jesus in the prayer which he taught his disciples saying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The second of these phrases may well be taken as the condition upon which the first one depends. Simply stated, the coming of the kingdom means that God's will must be done on earth. We know that, of course, but are slow to submit ourselves completely to the will of God. To be sure, it is often difficult for us to know just what the will of God

implies for our everyday lives. Honest doubt looms large in much of our thinking. Sometimes, however, we thereby do not wish to recognize the obvious responsibilities which are placed upon us if God's will is to be done on earth. How much easier it is to see what we believe is the will of God for someone else—for our neighbors, or for the Japanese, or for Hitler, or for the communists. We pass quick judgment on the large and distant affairs of the world but we close our eyes to the definite and concrete task of setting our own houses in order. Sit down some day for a period of prolonged meditation and think of the will of God for your own life. It will be startling, if you are honest in the light of Christ's teaching. Would you desire to have the Good Teacher prescribe a course of action for you as he did for the rich young ruler or for Nicodemus or for the Pharisees whom he so bitterly rebuked because of their smugness and hypocrisy? "Behold, the kingdom of God is within *you,*" at least in part. Although Christ comforted his followers with the word, "Fear not, little flock, God hath given you the Kingdom," they were not relieved of the necessity of courageous and self-sacrificial activity. And although we may believe that the destinies of men are ultimately in God's hand, we cannot escape responsibility for the many immediate tasks which confront our generation.

Thus to faith we must add obedience and now to obedience we must add persistence. "Be not weary in well doing for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." These words of the apostle are still needed for the encouragement of the faithful. Patience and persistence should rate a high place in the list of Christian virtues. For with all of our faith and obedience, with all of our renunciation of the prevalent sins of the world and frank acceptance of the prerequisites of the kingdom, God's righteousness is not going to come on earth with the speed of a globe-girdling airplane, nor will the specifications of the kingdom be delivered with the morning mail.

FACING THE DIFFICULT

Let us realize that the constancy of the struggle is really one of God's greatest gifts. How monotonous life would be without some dominant urge! As St. Clair Adams has expressed it,

> When man has been set an imperative goal
> He struggles toward it with a placid soul.

Therefore, "shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift." "Blessed are those who do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they *shall be* filled."

The challenge is before us! It is peculiarly apropos of the problems of our generation. Our salvation lies only in the direction of the reign of God's righteousness, but if we really mean business in our quest for the kingdom of God we must remember the earnest admonition of our Lord to seek that kingdom *first.*

A Pastoral Prayer

By Robert M. Grey

OUR FATHER: We have come to this quiet house from the world of plowed fields and growing crops, of crowded streets and noisy machines, of the set task and the numbered hours, of metered forces and counted pence. If we have quitted ourselves well in that toil which provides for our homes and adds to the comfort and wellbeing of our fellows, it is because Thou hast been with us. If we have carried our load lightly, it is because the strength which upholds the universe has stiffened our shoulders. If we have been keen in judgment, decisive in action, swift to profit honorably, it is because Thou hast not withheld thy wisdom from us. If we have thought beyond ourselves and put something of utility or beauty in the common store of man, it is because we have followed after Thy generosity. If we have comforted another, it is because we ourselves have been comforted of Thee.

We are mindful that we live also in a world of unseen realities where we touch not things, but Him who made all things, not commodities, but men; a world of thought, desire and purpose. Yet, we have thought too much without giving a thought to Thee; we have been carried away by desires that trespass on Thy purposes and tread on the just aspirations of our brothers; we have planned without an eye to Thy holy will. Help us to remember that Thou hast a will for us and that Thou wilt find us if we are humble, teachable and ready.

Forgive us that in this time, when men are able to chart the paths of the stars and to fly blind through the night, we have so little certainty about spiritual direction. We thumb the books which tell us how our fathers journeyed by faith, but we see not the goals toward which their children ought to move. Open Thou our eyes. But deliver us from that hypocrisy which prophesies the Day of God, yet leaves our doorstep cluttered with simple, instant tasks. Save us from that vanity which runs when it has no message to bear, is over busy with the second best, which seeks its private ends, but has no vision of Thyself.

We forbear to ask thy care for our stricken and burdened brothers, for they are graven on Thy palms. Rather do we seek for ourselves that love which makes their needs and grievances our own; and for them, fortitude, and trust in Thee.

Dwell Thou in our hearts where are the springs of our life in the open world. This we ask, not chiefly because we would enjoy more fully the pleasant ways of earth, or even because we would labor with profit in them, but rather because Thou Thyself art our exceeding great reward. Amen.

The Junior Church

By William James DuBourdieu

OUR junior church was ten years old last Sunday, and our experience has on the whole sustained the theory that children should have a separate church service of their own. Many experiments have been made by pastors and laymen to train the rising generation in church attendance. None has yet earned universal approval, but the achievements of ten years of junior church indicate that this method has much to commend it. First, it has taught our children actually to enjoy church worship; the presence of so many junior church alumni in our adult congregation allows no other conclusion. Second, it prevents the restlessness that characterizes the "family church," for tiny legs can hardly be still when the edge of a big church pew begins to shut off circulation. Third, it has been a means of grace for certain of our adults.

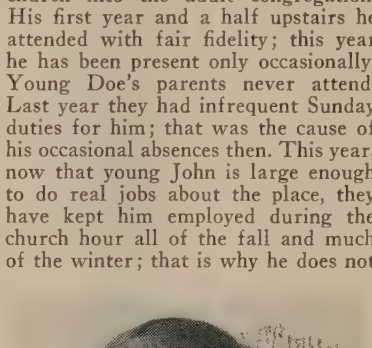
In preparation for the tenth anniversary service, the secretary, whose record of each individual's attendance goes back to the first meeting, was asked to submit a list showing how often each person on the roll had attended. Then, as pastor of the adult congregation, I rated the alumni of the list on their present standard of church attendance. The intention was to discover the correlation between the two. The result was informative, but for a different reason than we had anticipated.

Everyone realizes that parental interest and influence are vital factors in every child's life. Therefore, we decided to include parental church attendance in this correlation. Thus, both alumni and their parents were classified under the following headings: "always at church," "usually at church," "rarely at church" and "never at church." The tabulating of these ratings resulted in the unexpected discovery that *every* child, who in ten years has attended our junior church with any degree of frequency, attends today as often as or more than his most church-conscious parent. In other words, the child who grows up in junior church will attend Sunday worship faithfully in later years, *provided* the influence of his home is favorable.

● *Aids in Holding Young People*

A great deal is said these days about the church "not holding its young people." If by the "church's young people" one means the children of those adults who attend church, the record of our junior church alumni is testimony that the church can hold its own. Where there is a well-run junior church, the explanation of a young person's indifference to religion, is usually not the church but the parents.

I think of young John Doe. Two years ago he graduated from the junior church into the adult congregation. His first year and a half upstairs he attended with fair fidelity; this year he has been present only occasionally. Young Doe's parents never attend. Last year they had infrequent Sunday duties for him; that was the cause of his occasional absences then. This year, now that young John is large enough to do real jobs about the place, they have kept him employed during the church hour all of the fall and much of the winter; that is why he does not



William James DuBourdieu

attend church now. The trouble is not the church but the anti-religious influence of his parents.

In addition to children from religious homes, there are other youths whose parents are never seen in church, but who are themselves always present at divine worship. The record seems to indicate that our young people start the habit of church attendance while children in junior church and then, when they feel too large to continue worshiping in the downstairs chapel, they transfer this habit to the upstairs congregation. Our adult congregation also contains a considerable number of young people who have recently moved here from other localities. Their presence at church, we feel, is in part due to junior church—that is, our junior church graduates constitute so sizeable a percentage of the adult congregation that other youths feel at home in such a service.

One who has never operated a junior church may feel that the plan is fraught with difficulties. Where will the church meet? How can the necessary leadership be secured? What helps are available? Our experience should be of further interest, therefore, for it indicates answers to these queries.

● *Program for the Junior Church*

The meeting place of our junior church is a basement room under that part of the Sunday school plant which immediately adjoins the church auditorium. A Lutheran church in our city uses the room immediately under its church auditorium for its junior congregation. The two simultaneous services do not interfere because they are synchronized even to the extent that both groups sing at the same time. A junior church service at an hour different from that of the adult worship would not be desirable because junior church, being intended to train children to attend regular worship, should habituate them to come to the sanctuary at the established worship hour.

Leadership may be either professional or lay. When our junior church started, it hired one of our young men who was studying for the ministry to act as pastor. He began his labors while yet a student at college and continued well through his theological course. At the time he resigned, the depression had disorganized our finances and we felt unable to hire a successor. In the community, however, there lived a former Y.M.C.A. secretary; he had children of his own and was interested in our project. So, in volunteer capacity, he became the next pastor of our junior church.

A man of fertile imagination and sound psychology, the new junior church pastor introduced an innovation which shortly increased the attendance fifty per cent. Where his predecessor, a man of rare charm, had conducted the entire service himself, the new leader used the children to assist him. Each Sunday was assigned to a different Sunday school class to help him. In preparation, the teacher would seek to give every pupil some part; thus all Sunday school children of proper age were given a vital contact with the junior church. Experience showed that it was not wise to have children read the Scripture, for attention then wandered and disorder developed. But this method did result in the junior

church membership becoming almost identical with that of the corresponding classes of the Sunday school.

For one person to operate a junior church is a heavy responsibility so that we soon introduced our present system of operation, in which fourteen persons constitute the junior church staff: a superintendent, who presides over the worship period of the service; a secretary, who keeps a record of individual attendance and awards frequent attendance certificates; four preachers, each of whom preaches the sermons one month out of every four; four leaders of music and four pianists, these latter also functioning one month out of four.

● *Four Shifts of Workers Used*

The reason for using four shifts of workers to operate the junior church is that previous experience has shown that church workers do not like to be permanently deprived of the privilege of attending church, and that religious leadership creates a sense of need for that which the church service supplies. Shifts of superintendents and secretaries were not used, because it was felt that continuity was essential in these phases of the project. We were especially of the opinion that the superintendent needs to be present every Sunday, as a succession of worship leaders could very easily ruin the smoothness and beauty of the ritual and thus destroy one of the ends of the service.

Our present service in junior church is not a duplication of the adult worship but has been planned so as best to prepare the children for participation as members of the main congregation. It opens with twenty minutes of music drill, the purpose of which is to teach the children to enjoy the type of music of the older congregation. Next the pastor appears. His adult service is arranged so that the choir chants the offertory prayer and then follows with an anthem. This enables him to leave the upstairs congregation during the singing of the hymn which precedes the offering and he does not return until the anthem is concluded. In the junior church he gives a brief resume or excerpt of his regular sermon. This is not a so-called "children's talk," but a bona fide sample of what the upstairs group will hear. Its purpose is to accustom the juniors to the type of discourse of the main church. Also, the pastor's regular appearance makes the children feel that he belongs to them and not to their parents only.

At the time the minister leaves the upstairs service, the junior superintendent also does so. When the pastor completes his sermon to the juniors, the superintendent steps forward and leads the children in their worship. The ritual of this devotional period is largely identical with that of the grown-up church. The Scripture reading, however, is taken, not from a standard Bible, but from a children's version, which provides historical background and other explanation and is written in language adapted to little folks. At the close of the worship period, the preacher of the month takes charge. The superintendent, then, accompanied by the leader of singing and the pianist, returns to the upstairs service. Should the junior preacher finish before the upstairs service is concluded, he drills his congregation in Scripture memorization, and thus the two assemblies terminate together.

Once responsible leadership has been found, the chief problem of a junior church is securing adequate helps for those who preach. Children's sermons, such as are found in books bearing this label, are usually of five minutes' duration and thus are too brief to be serviceable. To combine several of these into a single sermon is not to be advocated, because such a discourse would be disjointed and lacking in unity and sequence, two of the classical essentials of a good sermon. There are, however, certain church school texts, at least one series of junior church manuals, and various children's books, all of which provide an ample supply of materials. When one once learns where these are available, sermon source materials are always easily secured.

Our theory has been that child interest will be greater if each preacher is made a specialist in a certain type of sermon. Thus, one of our preachers always delivers stereopticon sermons. His slides are obtained from denominational headquarters or from the Chicago public library. Another preaches missionary sermons. A third handles character education and a fourth, Bible history. For our superintendent's use we have reserved object sermons. He is supposed always to have one ready for use against the rare occasion when a regular preacher has suddenly to cancel an appearance. He also has a supply of short object talks which he inserts into the program as supplementary material when he feels that the children's interest begins to lag.

● *The Problem of Staff*

Securing volunteer workers, of course, is not always easy. Those who have ability often lack confidence in themselves, and there can be the embarrassment of having to retire unqualified workers. Our system has been to ask prospective staff members to help us "for just one month." This allows sufficient time to reveal their ability, but the period of obligation is so brief that people rarely decline the invitation. When the month's trial indicates real ability in an individual, we then give him an invitation to become a permanent member of the staff. So far, we have so accurately estimated in advance our prospects' abilities, that none who have been tried out have been found wanting. We shall not always be so fortunate, needless to say.

Graduation from junior church is not a fixed affair occurring on a set day, but rather a matter of individual volition. As our children grow, there ultimately comes to each a time when he feels himself older than the other members of junior church; the folks in the big church seem more his crowd. So, on his own initiative, he promotes himself upstairs. For perhaps a year, there follows a period in which he vacillates between the two institutions. Then, finally, when he has made the upstairs auditorium his permanent worship place, we offer him the privilege of church membership.

While there is no set age when one must graduate from junior church, there is a rule which governs the minimum age at which one may be admitted. First grade children and those younger are expected to go to a special kindergarten class. Children so young should not be allowed in junior church because they have not learned the art of quiet, motionless attention. Indeed, to hold the interest of children as young as the second grade is no mean feat!

Of course, there are other ways of building children in worship experience than the junior church. As a theological student I became acquainted with one such method. The Sunday school remained at the close of its session to attend the first quarter of the church hour. The pastor would preach a short sermon to the children and then, during the singing of a hymn, the entire school, teachers and pupils, would march out and go home. Such a system was a miscarriage of good intentions, and, in the particular church where I saw it in operation, it was a positive detriment to spiritual growth.

With this student experience to warn me, I made sure in my next charge that no opportunity should be made for people to leave in the midst of the service; if they did so, it was without the pastor's deliberate cooperation. A children's sermon was preached and a children's choir shared in the music, but all who attended were expected to be present for the whole of the service. This was a great improvement over the practice of the student field. While very young children were not reached, many older children did support the worship service and enjoy it.

But, this method is not as effective as the junior church. The junior church reaches more children and trains them better. It gives them a program every minute of which is planned to hold their attention. Also, it eliminates from the adult congregation that restlessness of children which often ruins worship. Of course, the junior church idea is not a panacea—there are no panaceas—but the junior church is a superior tool for training children to enjoy corporate worship. Ten years of junior church have demonstrated that fact!

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

Rev. HENRY SMITH LEIPER *is a Presbyterian minister who has been secretary of the Student Volunteer movement, a missionary in China, director of China famine relief, executive secretary of the American section of the Universal Christian council on life and work and the foreign secretary of the Federal council of churches. He is at present in Europe representing the Federal council at a number of important church and peace meetings which are being held during the summer.*

Rev. ROBERT RUSSELL WICKS, *the dean of the chapel at Princeton university, is one of the most successful preachers to students in America.*

No list of important preachers in America could claim even approximate completeness that did not include the name of JOHN HAYNES HOLMES, *the minister of the Community Church of New York. He is an aggressive fighter for social justice on many fronts as well as an influential contributor to contemporary religious thought.*

Rev. WILLIAM JAMES DUBOURDIEU, *who writes the article on "The Junior Church," is the minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Harvard, Illinois. He holds degrees from Hamilton college, Presbyterian theological seminary, and Northwestern university. He is an authority on religious radio broadcasting, being co-author with Dr. George H. Betts of "Radio's Contribution to Religion."*

With degrees from Southwestern university and the Boston university school of theology, GUY C. TETIRICK *began his ministerial work as a chaplain in the army during the War. Since then, he has served as pastor of First Methodist Church, at Picher, Oklahoma, and of University Methodist Church in Tulsa, where he is now located.*

Rev. CONINGSBY M. GORDON *is the pastor of the First Christian Church in Norfolk, Va. Although he has been educated in this country at the College of the Bible in Lexington, Ky., at Butler college and at Harvard university, he was born in Australia, and has served pastorates there as well as here. He has been in Norfolk for the last ten years.*

Rev. EARL FREDERICK ADAMS *is a Baptist minister in Buffalo, New York.*

The pastoral prayer has been written by Rev. ROBERT M. GREY, *Congregational minister in Woburn, Massachusetts.*

TITLES AND TEXTS — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

ROBERT A. LUNDY, Baptist Church, Alturas, Calif. "An Irresistible Appeal." John 11:28—"The master is here and calleth for thee."

RUFUS ANSLEY, Centerbrook Congregational Church, Centerbrook, Conn. "No Uncertain Trumpet." Matt. 7:29—"For he taught them as one having authority."

RALPH W. PAUL, Denison Avenue Congregational Church, Cleveland, Ohio. "The Unnecessary God Becomes Necessary." Psalm 14:1—"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. . . ." Psalms 69, 1, 2: "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. . . ."

M. S. HOSTETLER, Community Presbyterian Church, Greenriver, Utah. "Borrowed Property" (Stewardship). II Kings 6:5—"Alas, master! for it was borrowed."

RUDOLPH VIEWEG, German Evangelical Church, Elmira, N. Y. "The Ethiopian and Philip, A Study in Black and White." Acts 8:26—39.

J. K. MCDIVITT, JR., First Presbyterian Church, New Cumberland, W. Va. "The Two Gardens." Gen. 2:8—"And the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden." John 18:1—"And he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden."

W. J. CUNNINGHAM, Ripley Methodist Church, Ripley, Miss. "Christianity, a Commonsense Religion." Matthew 7:24—"Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts upon them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock" (Moffatt).

ALFRED RAY ATWOOD, Wesleyan Methodist Church, East Dennis, Mass. "The Permanent in Religion." Heb. 12:27—"Things which cannot be shaken."

H. D. HOOVER, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Penn. "Life begins at Forty." Acts 4:22—"The man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was showed."

G. MERRILL LENOX, Judson Memorial Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minn. "Victors Plus!" Romans 8:37—"Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of sermon

. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .
Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

PROBABLY President Roosevelt in his address at Chautauqua, N. Y., came as near voicing America's present peace thought as it is possible to do amid the international chaos which prevails at the moment. It is not a hopeful or inspiring program that he proposed. Indeed, his positive suggestions can be variously characterized as trivial, platitudinous, self-righteous and cowardly by those who are as yet unable to see the futility of the grandiose schemes for peace which have occupied our thoughts since the world war. But nations usually speak in platitudes and in boastful vanity, and emphasize their interests and safety in terms of moral virtue. The President rightfully and effectively condemned those nations which had proved faithless to their international promises. This rebuke is not to be discounted by the fact that America has not been subjected to temptation as have Italy, Japan and Germany. Besides, there is not now before the world any realistic constructive peace proposal *on the political level* which demands a decision on the part of this country. The whole conception of a peace resting upon the bare promises of political governments is now seen to be artificial and illusory. Moreover, the impending war which threatens Europe and Asia is one which the government of the United States can do little to prevent. Our most realistic policy at the moment should therefore be to explore to the limit the possibilities of keeping out of the conflict by resting our neutrality upon a basis wholly different from the assertion of our right to trade with belligerents. President Roosevelt seems to approve our renunciation of that right by effective legislative action.

America's Present Peace Policy

The Book of the Month

THE USE OF THE BIBLE IN PREACHING, *By Carl S. Patton. Willett, Clark & Company, $2.00.*

THE AMBITIOUS and resourceful publishing house of Willett, Clark & Company announce this book as the beginning of a "Minister's Professional Library" series to which it intends to add other volumes from time to time covering the entire range of problems which belong to the work of the ministry. I can see great possibilities in such a library. I understand that books are in preparation in the fields of public worship, sermon construction, church administration, the pastoral function, church music, religious education, youth's activities and other aspects of ministerial activity, including commentaries on the biblical texts from the point of view of discovering their preaching values. It was a fine stroke to secure Dr. Patton to initiate the series. His is one of the juiciest minds in the American ministry. I recently read an elaborate manuscript of his on the "Philosophy of Monism" which sounded as if its author had been a professor of philosophy for 25 years—except for the fact that it was far more lucid and gripping than nine-tenths of the professors could write! Yet during his whole life he has been a pastor and preacher, only recently having left the parish ministry to become dean of the Pacific school of religion. What wise counsel he gives the minister who is perplexed in his homiletic method by the new conception of the Bible which scholarship has given us! And who of us is not perplexed on this score? Through the Old Testament and the New, Dr. Patton moves with great skill and insight, banishing our fears, correcting our mistakes, and leaving in our hands a Bible that has been illuminated and re-affirmed as the Great Reservoir of inspiration upon which the preacher of today may draw with full intellectual consistency and with contemporary power.

A Thought for the Month

CHRISTIANITY, if it is true to its genius, must be always on the side of the poor. It matters not how successful the church has become, how prosperous, how dependent upon the rich for the maintenance of its institutions, how "good" these rich Christians may be in their personal characters, the church is not on the side of the rich, but its main interest is with the poor. In this fundamental aspect the church is a class institution. It was the poor to whom Jesus first preached the gospel, and the fact that the poor received it was given by him as a divine authentication of his mission. At no point in his activity did he betray a special interest in winning rich or powerful followers. On the contrary, it was to such men that he spoke solemnly about the necessity of being born again, and about selling their possessions and giving all to the poor. Jesus was never inconsistent on this score. Quite otherwise did he deal with the poor, the unprivileged, the outcast. Witness the Magdalene, the "publicans and harlots," the widow with her mite, and at least one beatitude. He saw that the poor possessed all the resources that were essential to the bringing of the Kingdom. He definitely rejected every resource except the resources which the poor possessed. The group of followers which he left behind had not a single trapping of wealth or political influence or worldly power to aid them in launching the new faith. It is possible to draw false inferences from this class-conscious character of essential Christianity, and thereby falsify Christianity. But such inferences would not falsify Christianity any more than does its development into a religion of the rich, the privileged and the respectable. A church disregarded by the kind of people to whom Jesus preached and to whom he committed the initiating of the Kingdom of God, is hardly the church of which he can be the Head. A gospel which is something other than good news to the poor is something other than Christian.

On The Side Of The Poor

Charles Clayton Morrison

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